

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please ADD new claim 31 in accordance with the following:

1. (Previously Presented) An image generating apparatus, comprising:
image generating means for generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups, each of the plurality of unit image groups being made up of a plurality of sequential images, being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer, and being specified by attribute information corresponding to the one communication information indicated thereby; and
display means for displaying said sequential character image.
2. (Previously Presented) An image generating apparatus, comprising:
an image generating part generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups, each defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate a respective, individual communication information to a viewer;
a display part configured to display said sequential character image; and
a storage part storing a plurality of said unit image groups,
said storage part storing a plurality of kinds of unit image groups having mutually different starting reference images and ending reference images with respect to a same communication information, and
said image generating part reading a leading unit image group and a trailing image group which has a starting reference image approximately matching an ending reference image of the leading unit image group from said storage means and connecting the leading and trailing unit image groups.
3. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for causing a computer to generate a sequential character image, said program comprising:

an image generating procedure causing the computer to generate a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups, each of the plurality of unit image groups being made up of a plurality of sequential images, being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer and being specified by attribute information corresponding to the one communication information indicated thereby; and

a display procedure causing the computer to display said sequential character image.

4. (Previously Presented) An image generating apparatus which generates a motion picture, comprising:

a database configured to store unit component images, each representing a respective series of actions, being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer and being made up of a plurality of images including a starting image and an ending image of an action of a character;

a data retrieving part configured to selectively search and read the unit component images stored in said database; and

a connecting part configured to connect an end image of a first unit component image read by said data retrieving part and a starting image of a second unit component image read by said data retrieving part.

5. (Previously Presented) An image generating apparatus for generating a motion picture, comprising:

a database configured to store unit image groups respectively representing an action of a character and made up of a plurality of sequential images, in correspondence with attribute information defining each action, each of said unit image groups being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer by the action represented thereby;

a retrieving part configured to read a unit image group corresponding to input attribute information from said database, based on the input attribute information; and

an editing part configured to edit the unit image group read by said retrieving part.

6. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for causing a computer to generate a motion picture, said program comprising:

a data retrieving procedure causing the computer to selectively search and read unit component images stored in a database which stores unit component images representing

respective series of actions, each of said unit component images being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer and being made up of a plurality of images including a starting image and an ending image of an action of a character; and

a connecting procedure causing the computer to connect an end image of a first unit component image which is caused to be read by said data retrieving procedure and a starting image of a second unit component image which is caused to be read by said data retrieving procedure.

7. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for causing a computer to generate a motion picture, said program comprising:

a retrieving procedure causing the computer to read a unit image group corresponding to input attribute information from a database, based on the input attribute information, said database storing unit image groups representing respective actions of a character and made up of a plurality of sequential images, in correspondence with attribute information defining each action, each of said unit image groups being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer by the respective action represented thereby; and

an editing procedure causing the computer to edit the unit image group caused to read by said retrieving procedure.

8. (Previously Presented) An image generating apparatus comprising:

an image generating part generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups, each of the plurality of unit image groups being made up of a plurality of sequential images, being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer, and being specified by attribute information corresponding to the one communication information indicated thereby;

a display part displaying the sequential character image; and

a control configured to display a device depending on a motion of the sequential character image.

9. (Previously Presented) An image generating apparatus, comprising:

a sequence generating part generating an operation sequence by connecting a plurality of picture scenes of a character image generated by said image generating apparatus, by treating the character image in units of significance spaces corresponding to one picture scene

from a point in time when a switching of one picture of the character image occurs to a point in time when a next switching of one picture occurs,

each of said significance spaces being defined as an object at least including a method corresponding to a character display and a method corresponding to a user input and/or output.

10. (Previously Presented) The image generating apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein said sequence generating part calls a corresponding data file by searching a database based on a retrieval key specified by each method.

11. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for causing a computer to generate an operation sequence, said program comprising:
a sequence generating procedure causing the computer to generate an operation sequence by connecting a plurality of picture scenes of a character image, by treating the character image in units of significance spaces corresponding to one picture scene from a point in time when a switching of one picture of the character image occurs to a point in time when a next switching of one picture occurs, each of said significance spaces being defined as an object at least including a method corresponding to a character display and a method corresponding to a user input and/or output.

12. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium as claimed in claim 11, wherein each of said significance spaces further includes at least one of a method corresponding to audio reproduction, a method corresponding to a cooperation process of the character display and the audio reproduction, and a method corresponding to a background image.

13. (Previously Presented) A database, comprising:
a character image stored in units of significance spaces corresponding to one picture scene from a point in time when a switching of one picture of the character image occurs to a point in time when a next switching of one picture occurs, and
each of said significance spaces is defined as an object at least including a method corresponding to a character display and a method corresponding to a user input and/or output.

14. (Original) The database as claimed in claim 13, wherein an operation sequence is generated by connecting a plurality of picture scenes of the character image, and data files of

the character image stored in the database are searched based on retrieval keys specified by each of methods.

15. (Previously Presented) An image generating method to generate a motion picture, comprising:

defining communication information, which guarantees in advance to indicate the communication information to a viewer;

generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups, each of the plurality of unit image groups being made up of a plurality of sequential images, being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer, and being specified by attribute information corresponding to the one communication information indicated thereby; and

displaying said sequential character image.

16. (Previously Presented) An image generating method to generate a motion picture, comprising:

defining communication information, which guarantees in advance to indicate the communication information to a viewer;

generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups which, respectively, indicate the communication information to a viewer;

displaying said sequential character image;

storing a plurality of said unit image groups;

storing a plurality of kinds of unit image groups having mutually different starting reference images and ending reference images with respect to a same communication information; and

reading a leading unit image group and a trailing unit image group which has a starting reference image approximately matching an ending reference image of the leading unit image group from said storage means and connecting the leading and trailing unit image groups.

17. (Previously Presented) An image generating apparatus, comprising:

an image generator generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups respectively representing an action of a character and made up of a plurality of sequential images, in correspondence with attribute information defining each action, each of the plurality of unit image groups being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one

communication information to a viewer by the action represented thereby; and
a display part displaying said sequential character image.

18. (Previously Presented) The image generating apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the plurality of said unit image groups are made up of humanoid images.

19. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium as claimed in claim 3, wherein the plurality of said unit image groups are made up of humanoid images.

20. (Previously Presented) The image generating apparatus as claimed in claim 9, further comprising:

a cooperation unit adjusting a reproducing time of image data when the reproducing time of the image data and a reproducing time of audio data do not match, such that the adjusted reproducing time of image data matches the reproducing time of audio data.

21. (Previously Presented) An image generating method to generate a motion picture, comprising:

defining communication information, which guarantees in advance to indicate the communication information to a viewer;

generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups which, respectively, indicate the communication information to a viewer;

displaying said sequential character image; and

adjusting a reproducing time of image data when the reproducing time of the image data and a reproducing time of audio data do not match, such that the adjusted reproducing time of image data matches the reproducing time of audio data.

22. (Previously Presented) An image generating apparatus comprising:

an image generating part generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups, which are respectively defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer; and

a display part displaying said sequential character image,

wherein at least one of the plurality of unit image groups has a respective starting image substantially identical to a respective trailing image.

23. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program causing a computer to generate a sequential character image, said program comprising:

an image generating procedure causing the computer to generate a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups which are respectively defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer; and

a display procedure causing the computer to display said sequential character image, wherein at least one of the plurality of unit image groups has a respective starting image substantially identical to a respective trailing image.

24. (Previously Presented) The image generating apparatus as claimed in claim 4, wherein at least one of the plurality of unit image groups has a respective starting image substantially identical to a respective trailing image.

25. (Previously Presented) An image generating apparatus for generating a motion picture, comprising:

a database storing unit image groups, each representing a respective action of a character and made up of a plurality of images, in correspondence with attribute information defining each action, each of said unit image groups being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer;

a retrieving part reading a unit image group corresponding to input attribute information from said database, based on the input attribute information; and

an editing part editing the unit image group read by said retrieving part, wherein at least one of the plurality of unit image groups has a respective starting image substantially identical to a respective trailing image.

26. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium as claimed in claim 6, wherein at least one of the plurality of unit image groups has a respective starting image substantially identical to a respective trailing image.

27. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for causing a computer to generate a motion picture, said program comprising:

a retrieving procedure causing the computer to read a unit image group corresponding to input attribute information from a database, based on the input attribute information, said

database storing unit image groups respectively representing an action of a character and made up of a plurality of images, in correspondence with attribute information defining each action, each of said unit image groups being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer; and

an editing procedure causing the computer to edit the unit image group caused to read by said retrieving part,

wherein at least one of the plurality of unit image groups has a respective starting image substantially identical to a respective trailing image.

28. (Previously Presented) An image generating apparatus, comprising:
an image generating part generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups which are respectively defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer;

a display part displaying the sequential character image; and

a control part controlling a device depending on a motion of the sequential character image,

wherein at least one of the plurality of unit image groups has a respective starting image substantially identical to a respective trailing image.

29. (Previously Presented) An image generating method to generate a motion picture, comprising:

defining communication information, which guarantees in advance to indicate the communication information to a viewer;

generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups which, respectively, indicate the communication information to a viewer; and

displaying said sequential character image,

wherein at least one of the plurality of unit image groups has a respective starting image substantially identical to a respective trailing image.

30. (Previously Presented) An image generating apparatus comprising:

an image generating part generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups which, respectively, represent an action and the plurality of unit image groups are guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer; and

a display part displaying said sequential character image,

wherein at least one of the plurality of unit image groups has a respective starting image substantially identical to a respective trailing image.

31. (New) An image generating apparatus, comprising:

image generating means for generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups, each of the plurality of unit image groups being made up of a plurality of sequential images, being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate an individual communication information to a viewer, and being specified by attribute information corresponding to the individual communication information indicated thereby; and

display means for displaying said sequential character image